

February 22, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Please accept this written testimony on the impact of the Governor's budget on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These individuals are the most vulnerable in our communities and truly need our support. They are deserving of a fulfilling life filled with opportunity and success, therefore, it is my mission and responsibility to advocate for what is right.

Progress towards addressing the needs of those with disabilities should not come at the expense of other needed services in the community, especially when there are still millions of dollars being spent on overtime and waste in DDS institutions and other facilities. Please consider the following requests with regards to the new budget, which would ensure positive changes and a bright future for individuals in need of support:

1. Please cut overtime and waste in DDS – Do not cut community services.
2. Please restore funding for Day and Employment Services for new graduates.
3. Please restore funding for Family Support Grants.
4. Please restore funding for new families who need Behavioral Support Services.
5. Please support the Governor's proposal to invest \$3.8 million in the ID Partnership which will help people on the DDS residential waiting list, support developing more residential options for people with I/DD and stabilize community based supports.

If the above proposals are not addressed, what will happen to the individuals with disabilities that will be affected by these grave circumstances? Where will they go? What will their families do? How will they be able to grow and flourish in a world with no supports being offered to them? These are all very serious questions with devastating answers, however, I am hopeful that the needed changes which will promote the well-being of those with disabilities will be considered and approved for the new budget.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Dennis Walsh
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